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ABSTRACT

These five papers are from a symposium facilitated by Verna J. Willis on the learning organization at the 1995 Academy of Human Resource Development (HRD) conference. "Processes of Organizational Learning: A Framework for Training and Development Policies and Methodologies in a Learning Organization Perspective" (Massimo Tomassini) sketches a conceptual framework of the different processes of organizational learning and provides suggestions for reflection about new training and development policies and methodologies within enterprises in a learning organization perspective. "Implementing the Learning Organization: A Case Study" (Laura L. Bierema, David M. Berndish) is a case study of Ford's Electric and Fuel-handling Division. "Coaching the Un-coachables in the Learning Organization" (John Zuber, Roger Miller) examines the potential of coaching as a key process within the learning organization, integrating literature from three areas: the learning organization, on-the-job coaching, and individual behavior change. "Feedback Seeking Behavior: A Review of the Literature from the HRD Perspective" (Svjetlana Madzar) explores theoretical and empirical research on feedback-seeking behavior and the effects of feedback seeking on the individual and the organization. "The Role of Managers as Trainers in the Learning Organization: Implications for HRD" (Andrea Ellinger, Maria Cseh) suggests that the manager-as-trainer approach holds promise to facilitate continuous learning at the individual, team, and organizational level in a competitive global economy, and that new roles for human resource developers will complement this approach. (KC)

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Process of Organizational Learning: A Framework for the Development of Policies and Techniques in a Learning Organization Perspective
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Implementing The Learning Organization: A Case Study
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David M. Berdish, Ford Motor Company

Coaching the Un-coachables in the Learning Organization
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Processes Of Organizational Learning. A Framework For Training And Development Policies And Methodologies In A Learning Organization Perspective.

Massimo Tomassini
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This paper sketches a conceptual framework concerning different processes of organizational learning. The aim is to provide, through such a framework, some suggestions for reflection about new training and development policies and methodologies within enterprises in different productive and non-profit sectors in a learning organization perspective.

The crisis of the most common models of education and training interventions creates a larger demand for new policies adequate to the fast growing dynamics of change within the enterprises and the non-profit complex organizations. The policy-makers in these fields show an increasing interest for the *learning organization* as a vision which can contribute to the reshaping of the so far prevailing approaches, methods and tools for the human resources development. The *learning organization* is now is becoming a crucial referring point for several kinds of new interventions that mix together education-training approaches and *organizational development* (OD) and *total quality* approaches.

But the search for the operational dimensions of the *learning organization* should not let forget that this is not a clear-cut concept fitting for "managerial recipes" or ready-to-use formulas. The possibilities of effective uses of the *learning organization* idea is closely linked to an in-depth understanding of its theoretical bases, especially on the cognitive ground. The learning organization simply does not exist in nature. It is only a *metaphor*, a conceptual artifact that allows treating different emerging phenomena in relatively homogeneous terms. These phenomena are all related to *knowledge*, the crucial resource of our era, whose role in the economic and social processes is increasingly pivotal in very different disciplinary approaches (from economics to cognitive sciences) and also increasingly present in the common sense of those who operate in the world of the organizations. In tackling any learning organization issue one is in fact concerned with *knowledge*, its uses, its effects. Every discourse about the learning organization is about cognitive aspects, closely intertwined with the behavioral aspects concerning individuals, groups, entire organizations.

This perspective stresses the organization as " a cognitive system that activates knowledge in order to produce new knowledge through continous learning processes" (Vicari, 1991). *Knowledge* is a central issue also in the business dimension. The Ceo of a very dynamic high-tech enterpise defined *organizational learning*, as something which "occurs through shared insights,knowledge and mental models..and builds on past knowledge and experience, that is on memory"(Stata, 1989). And a Japanese top consultant stated that "successful companies are those that consistently create new knowledge, disseminate it widely through the organization, and quickly embody it in new technologies and products; these activities define the "*knowledge creating*" company, whose sole business is continous innovation. (Nonaka,1991). A good synthesis is offered by Garvin (1993) in the following terms "a learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge and at modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights".

Through the previous definitions it is possible to enphasize the fundamental multiplicity of the cognitive meaning of *organizational learning*. In an attempt for a closer understanding of this topic, based on a recent research study (Tomassini, 1993) and following reflections, *organizational learning* is seen as articulated into six main different processes: *learning by doing, knowledge sharing, translating knowledge into competencies, acquiring external knowledge, integrating explicit and tacit knowledge, implementing knowledge-based management approaches*. In the same way that the learning organization is considered as a metaphor, these process are surely not exhaustive of the complex realities they deal with; they can have only a *dispositional* value: that is they can assign a certain order to a series of charachteristics of something which is not a concrete object, like an organization, and especially a learning organization.

Processes Of Organizational Learning

Learning By Doing. The first fundamental process can be depicted in terms of *learning by doing*. The key word to be put forward in this case is *routine*. Every individual learns first through routines, acting regularly in his/her more common activities (*routine* :"regular and definite way of doing things", Oxford Dictionary). But also for the learning of the organizations *routine* is a crucial term, especially

from the point of view of the *evolutionary theory of the firm* (Nelson Winter, 1982) in which routines are "*regular and predictable behavioural structures in an organization*" and play a very important role for many functioning and innovation processes.

Since the Thirties, several studies have shown the crucial role of routines in terms of the so-called *learning curves*. The idea was that the direct labor hours required to complete any production task decreases substantially as the total number of times the job performed increases. This drop in *per unit* costs is attributed to the learning that takes place every time the worker repeats the task because of his increasing familiarity with the production tecniques. The importance of the Nelson's and Winter's study lies in its going far beyond these "shop-floor related" results: in organizational routines they include not only those directly related to the manufacturing processes, but also, for instance, the procedures for hiring and firing or ordering new inventory, etc. and also the policies at the highest levels, such as the policies for investments, R&D and other.

In this approach routines are seen as playing in an organization the same role of *genes* in an organism. Routines are what is more typical of an organization, what makes it different from any other one, and what allows for its evolution by following the existing paths. In a similar way, the role of routines is seen as crucial in the organizational sciences, especially when the difference between formal and informal routines is stressed (Levitt March, 1982). On one side routines are formal artifacts such as rules, procedures, conventions, etc..On the other side they are something deeply related to cognitive and cultural phenomena: beliefs, frameworks, paradigms, etc.. So, on one side routines embody the *codified knowledge* of the organization, on the opposite they embody the *tacit knowledge*; and they store the *memory* of the organization.

Following these kinds of approaches, related to the processes of learning by doing (through routines) it is possible to shed light on some fundamental characteristics of the learning organization. This is the one in which the awareness about the functioning of routines is well developed and in which different mechanisms are at work as far as the constant innovation of routines is concerned. In the learning organization there is an intensive selection among the routines, in mantaining and recombining those which work and substituting those which do not work with new ones.

Knowledge Sharing. In this perspective, the second fundamental process is *knowledge sharing*. Knowledge in the organizations - as far as practical, routinary knowledge - is largely of a collective nature. Following the phenomenological approaches, knowledge is a "social construction"; in the organizational contexts this means that knowledge is built through the cognitive interactions of the actors, it is *situated knowledge*, related to the *work practices*: the ways in which people cooperate, apply and modify the routines, understand the day-to-day reality, talk each other, record the most important events in the organizational history. A very interesting recent study about groups of service technicians for the maintenance of photocopy machines shows, for instance, the ways in which they constitute *a community of practices* continously shaping the knowledge they use, outside - and often despite - the official channels such as training, standard operational practices, etc. (Orr, 1993). They became expert in repairing the machines mostly by telling each other "stories" about the machines and the clients, about successes and failures in repairing them.

These kinds of communities of practices can be considered successful examples of growth and change in learning, but generally things are different. The most common kind of learning is the one defined by Argyris and Schoen (1978) as *single-loop learning*. *Single-loop learning* is typical of the burcaeratic organization; it tends to reproduce the *status quo* like in the functioning of a thermostat and occurs when the detection and correction of errors permits the organization only to carry on its present policies and achieve its current objectives. The second kind of learning is the *double-loop-learning* which occurs when the potentialities of the knowledege sharing are really exploited, when people in the organization can compare the images that everybody has about the situation, to carry out joint enquiries, to reconstruct the collective maps about "where are we going, what is happening". *Double-loop-learning* not only allows the correction of errors but also the modification of the routines (norms, policies, objectives and mental models) underlying the same errors. In the Argyris and Schoen approach the third and most advanced kind of learning is called *deutero-learning*; it consists of enquiry into the learning system by which an organization detects and corrects its errors and occurs when the organizational actors are aware of the learning processes in which they are involved, that is they are capable of learning to learn. *Deutero-learning* is in fact the *learning to learn*, very frequently quoted but rarely in the appropriate way. Therefore the learning organization is the one in which people are aware of their roles as cognitive agents and are currently able to reflect on their own cognitive processes and to carry on joint enquries to assess and improve the state of the collective learning and of the shared knowledge.

Translating Knowledge Into Competences. Knowledge and learning are necessarily collective, but it is also true that they are embodied in individuals. The abilities of individuals to learn, to process knowledge, to act as experts in their field of action is a fundamental source of competitive advantage for

the organization. In this sense a *learning organization is an organization of experts*, able to continously translate knowledge into competences and into successful outcomes.

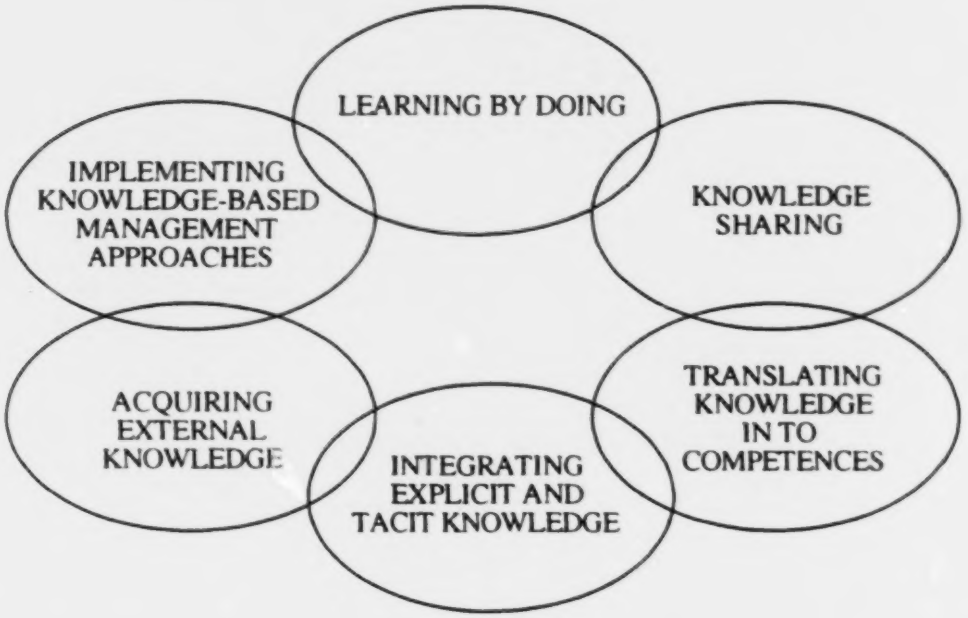
The key word here is *expertise*. Following Simon (Prietula Simon, 1989) it is possible to say that "expertise is much more than knowing a myriad of facts. expertise is based on a deep knowledge of the problems that continually arise on a particular job. It is accumulated over years of experience tackling these problems and is organized in the expert's mind in ways that allow him or her to overcome the limits of reasoning". Therefore *expertise* is not only the resource of outstanding professionals in the organization, or of the "high flyers" operating in the more specialistic functions: also a simple secretary who acts as interface with the customers can be considered a crucial expert.

Experts embody large amounts of *tacit knowledge* (or *personal knowledge*). This is the kind of knowledge studied by the philosopher of science Michael Polany (1962) as deriving from "*sets of rules which are not known as such to the person following them*". *Tacit knowledge* is a sort of hidden reserve of knowledge, not completely understood by those in which it is embodied ("*we usually know more that we can tell*", after Polany), letting appear as smooth and natural the effective performances.

Expertise has much to do with this kind of knowledge and only partially with formal knowledge, acquired in school, vocational training or firm-based courses; expertise is in fact a mix of formal and tacit aspects.

Following the cognitivistic studies the experts develop something defined as *procedural knowledge* in opposition to the *declarative knowledge* typical of non-experts and novices. The former is substantially *know-how*, while the latter is *know-what*. The novice goes on with his/her work trying to solve the problems step by step while the expert is mostly concerned with problem-setting and is able to generate very rapid, "intuitive" solutions.

In order to apply the principle that the *learning organization is an organization of experts*, innovative policies must be realized and the ways in which either knowledge is acquired or expertise is recognized and rewarded must be carefully managed.



Integrating Explicit And Tacit Knowledge. Another process of organizational learning, closely related to the previous one, can be specifically identified in the integration of explicit and tacit knowledge. In this case as well, *tacit knowledge* is a key issue, not in relation to the individual skills and competences but to the capacity of the firm, as a whole, to use and develop its cognitive potentials at all levels, to transform the personal knowledge of the individuals into valuable organizational knowledge. Therefore the *learning organization* can be conceived as an organization continously allowing knowledge to flow from person to person and from departement to department (Nonaka, 1991). In this perspective the flows are channelled in a "knowledge spiral" in which four main steps can be distinguished:

from tacit to tacit, regarding the processes of *socialization*, that is the knowledge transfer through direct and individualized contacts, for instance, the kind of transfer which take place within on-the-job training or apprenticeship settings;
from tacit to explicit. This is the case of the *externalization* processes, where new value is created for the firm through the observation of tacit work routines and expertise in action. Nonaka quotes, for instance, the case of an R&D department which designed a new type of toaster starting from the observation of the activity of a chief baker in a Tokyo restaurant;
from explicit to tacit, related to the *internalization*, that is creation of new insights from information and knowledge shared among different actors and which can acquire new meanings when entering into the personal knowledge of every single sharer;
from explicit to explicit, based on the *combination* of already existing information and knowledge. This is the case, for instance, of the advantages acquired storing in a computerized database the relevant data about a certain topic, or the case of internal reports referring to the state of the art about a particular problem.

An organization that is capable of facilitating all these processes is surely a learning organization, mobilizing the resources of creativity in all the different areas of activity.

Acquiring External Knowledge. In the processes of organizational learning quoted up to now knowledge is mainly internal to the organization: it is embodied in routines, built through the dynamics of the social construction of reality, linked to the *double-loop* or *single-loop* learning (or *deutero-learning*) of the actors, to their resources of expertise and to the capacities of the firm in integrating formal and tacit knowledge. But of course there are also flows of knowledge external to the organization. Learning from outside is crucial for the survival in the market, absorbing every useful input for innovation and growth.

At this level too the difference between formal and tacit knowledge is relevant. At the first level (Winter, 1987) knowledge is an *economic asset* which the firms can buy on the specific markets of knowledge, like in the cases of licenses, patents, etc.. The firm can also create knowledge having an economic value within its R&D departments (producing patents and other proprietary objects which can be sold as such) or through interfirm cooperation, whose ultimate goal is not only to exploit jointly the potentialities of a certain market but to share specific knowledge about production processes or products.

The cooperation phenomena take place also through the relationships with clients, suppliers and other organizations. From *customers*, new knowledge can be gained not only to improve the products for the same customers but also to enrich the global knowledge reserve of the organization. *Suppliers* as well provide precious knowledge embodied in their technologies or materials or products. Other enterprises can be a source of important acquisitions both at the *explicit* (like in the case of the *benchmarking* activities) and at the *tacit* level, even through *covert* practices (such as those related to *reverse engineering*). Therefore, the learning organization is the one able to reduce, as far as possibile, the boundaries with the external environments and to match the acquisitions and the production of formal knowledge with all the other types of knowledge that are useful for its development.

Implementing Knowledge-Based Managerial Approaches. Last but not least, knowledge and learning must be managed at all the levels of the organization, starting from the top. The idea that the learning organization is mainly a concern of the top management, as stated by several authors, cannot be shared. But of course it is absolutely unthinkable to have a cognitively dynamic organization without positive attitudes of its managers regarding *knowledge* and *knowledge-based strategic approaches*. This is particularly true considering that in our era of very high competition the enterprises need not only to react to the changes on their markets but also, within certain limits, to induce the changes.

The emerging shift in the managerial strategic approaches can be described like a passage from an *adaptive* kind of learning (fitting for given standards of the processes and for *flexibility* in the structures) to a *generative* one, synonimous of *creative* and fitting for *latent needs* of the consumers. (Senge, 1990). *Enactment* is a good term to define something which is very close the *generative learning* (Weick, 1984). *Enactment* is related to "intrusive" strategies, continuous testing of new strategic behaviours, "invention" of the evironment. In this sense, an outstanding case is Polaroid which enacted its market creating a new kind of photocamera, not analyzing the actual trends in the demand but putting forward a completely new product. Therefore the learning organization is the one in which the leading groups tend to pass *from decisions to visions*, from managerial activities conceived as rational decision-making, based on the processing of the largest amounts of data, to activities mostly *knowledge-oriented*. In this perspective, for instance, the planning activities have to be conceived as a continous exercise of learning within the managerial leading groups through the comparison of different points of view and the building of alternative scenarios (De Geus, 1992).

Concluding Remarks: Clues For New Policies Of Education And Raining

This paper is aimed at providing a framework concerning different processes of organizational learning and some clues for further reflections about new policies in the field of education and training in the enterprises.

A first area of reflection is mainly related to the universe of theories and practices in which trainers and consultants live, especially those operating in the field of the *organizational development* with a variety of backgrounds and specializations. The learning perspective reinforces their general mission of *helping people to help themselves* (Schein, 1987) with a stronger emphasis on the cognitive aspects. Trainers are of course mainly involved in this perspective: their skills should pass from a pattern of mere *knowledge transfer* to a more complex one related to the *facilitation of the learning processes* with greater ability in the use of different tools and techniques.

Considering this area, it should be possible to use the above presented framework in order to identify and assess the tools and techniques more fitting for the development of the learning organization. The following are only examples but should give a rough idea about this purpose.

For instance, as far as the *learning by doing* process is concerned a renewed attention should be paid to the *action learning* methods and to the other kinds of interventions aimed at problem-solving and routine innovation. The *knowledge sharing* process is surely fostered by the techniques that tend to promote and facilitate teamwork (Metaplan or like) and the commonality of visions and practices. As far as the process of *translating knowledge into competences* is concerned, it seems to require a stronger concern from the *personnel* functions; for instance the *success competences* approach (trying to identify what *excellent* performances and related skills are in fact required in a given organization) is a good method to promote a more dynamic meaning of competence and of effective ways for the promotion and the rewarding of the expertise. *Integrating explicit and tacit knowledge* is a process which has several interfaces with the ones linked to knowledge sharing, but it requires tools and techniques aimed at *creativity* (such as those implying the adoption of lateral thinking attitudes, the acquisition of different languages and codes of interpretation, etc.) and *quality*, (related to the understanding of the organization as an integrated chain, where the value of the final product depends on the fine tuning of the efforts of all the areas involved). *Acquiring external knowledge* is a process strongly based on the traditional and ever fundamental educational and training activities (courses, seminars, etc..) whose relationships should be enhanced with the real learning dynamics which take place in the organization. But this kind of process is also served by other techniques, such as *benchmarking* or the like. For the *implementation of knowledge-based strategic approaches* the focus is less on management education and more on the new technologies of interactive thinking within managerial groups, that can have significant impacts on the mental models of the managers (*managerial flight simulators*, Senge 1990; De Geus, 1988, 1992).

A second area of reflection is related to the needs and practices internal to the dynamics of specific organization. In this case the theories and practices involved are typically those of managers and professionals operating inside the organization especially those who have strategic positions regarding the use of knowledge, its sharing, creation and dissemination, its links to the changes of the organizational behaviours and to the innovations in processes and products. These managers and professionals can be identified as the principle *learning agents* in the organization. Being a learning agent should be seen not as an option but a usual attitude and behaviour in a very wide range of activities within the organizations which tend to become a learning organization.

Within this ideal category a very important role is of course played by the *line-managers* with specific responsibilities for the human resource management and development in their areas.

Their emerging task is that of acting as *coaches* of working groups and teams, fostering high quality performances. In the perspective of the six processes *coaching* is linked to the development of at least four of those.

First, coaching means to promote higher levels of *learning by doing*, especially as far as problem-solving activities are concerned, the aim being to foster creative uses of the usual routines. Problem-solving can be seen as an incremental activity of maintenance, selection and innovation of the regular ways of doing things. Second, coaching means to intervene on the *knowledge sharing* process through positive support to the cognitive social practices (such as collective inquiries, teamworking, etc..) thus allowing double-loop learning and deutero-learning. Third, coaching is to a large extent a way of helping individuals to develop *personal knowledge* and to *transfer it into competences* which are increasingly valuable for the organization; the coach must continuously encourage the self-confidence and the creativity of people and facilitate learning. Fourth, as the activity of coaching is mainly facilitation of learning, both acquisition of formal knowledge and development of tacit knowledge must be fostered and reciprocally integrated. The coach must stimulate all the cognitive activities related to a

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certain working activity (observation, reflection, attempt of new solutions, etc..). Therefore all these characteristics of the emerging role of the coach are integrated in an approach to management which is first of all related to knowledge.

Other examples of the six processes as guidelines for the interpretation of the roles of the learning agents in the organization derive from different staff functions. For instance, in very common situations, the functions called *organization* (or like) have much to do with the process of learning by doing. The job of its members is often to analyze the different working areas and to contribute to the processes of selecting and innovating the routines, formalizing the changes which took place in practice or helping to realize which are the trends and the needs. On the other hand, in situations of technological innovation the *information systems* function, and those who perform roles related to the informatization processes can have strong (positive or negative) influence on the social cooperation at work and in the knowledge sharing processes. This influence is positive when the new systems introduced are distributed database or *groupware* type. It is negative when the automation tends to reduce the skilling and the cooperating abilities of the people.

The *personnel* or *human resource development* areas can play a very important role in the process of translating knowledge into competences: recent experiences show good results of permanent *observatories on competences* based not on average competences but on *success competences* which can be assumed as a term of reference in a specific field of activity.

The R&D function has an elective link with the integration of explicit and tacit knowledge and also with the acquisition of external knowledge. The scientists and technologists employed in the R&D areas are not only devoted to the creation of new scientific knowledge embodied in products or in patents, they have also important learning tasks, from *intelligence*, *gatekeeping*, observation, participation in the activities of the scientific communities.

The aforementioned ones are only examples, but may be useful to reflect on the very wide areas to be covered for different policies aimed at the development of some forms of learning organization. In this perspective the framework of the six processes could be developed to create various grids for organizational analysis, audit of the organizational learning processes, design of continuous improvement projects, etc..trying to overcome the traditional "training needs analysis" and the interventions based only on courses and seminars.

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Implementing The Learning Organization: A Case Study

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In today's dynamic, complex business environment, some organizations defend competitiveness by becoming learning organizations. Learning organizations think systemically and learn collaboratively. This article highlights a case study of an implementation of the learning organization at Ford's Electric and Fuel handling Division. It provides an overview of the collaboration between a community college and the company to deliver training and shares findings of this preliminary research. Participants experienced enhanced reflection, connectedness, courage, and application of principles.

We are in a new age. One where old ways of thinking are no longer working, and new ones must be sought (Ray & Rinzler, 1993; Senge, 1990; Wardman, 1994). Our worldview, heavily influenced by Newtonian Physics and the machine age, has caused us to take a mechanistic, reductionist view of work and organizations (Ackoff, 1993). Ackoff suggests that our current managerial and administrative problems were caused by a world that operates as a social system, but we have attempted to solve them using a mechanistic approaches. Ray and Rinzler (1993) describe mechanistic thinking as the "clockwork view" in which, "we set up clockworks of organizations that function by rigid hierarchies, with people seen as replaceable components who work on the basis of orders from above. Those orders come from mangers who have been taught that individual values and intuition are to be scorned . . . people are the parts that get in the way, rather than the contributors to success who simultaneously grow from their contribution" (p. 5). This view causes us to toss away feelings, insights, intuition, entrepreneurial drive and passion from our work.

The alternative to the mechanistic view lies in the learning organization. It is a process that values change, new thinking, creativity, knowledge, learning, and intuition. This viewpoint suggests that today's organizational problems cannot be resolved using the same thinking they were created with. Senge (1990) notes that, "from a very early age, we are taught to break apart problems, to fragment the world" (p. 3). He suggests that we pay an enormous price for such thinking because, we do not connect the consequences of our actions to the larger system or whole. The learning organization proposes a systemic or holistic way of understanding the world so that we can, "see the big picture. . . . and expand [our] capacity to create the results [we] truly desire" (Senge, 1990, p. 3). The learning organization has been proposed as the answer to shifting from the mechanistic to systemic worldview in business (Senge, 1990; Watkins and Marsick, 1993).

Background

Some organizations such as AT&T, Chaparral Steel, Federal Express, Ford, Harley-Davidson, Intel, Minnesota Educational Computing Corporation, Motorola, and others are using Peter Senge's learning organization model described in his 1990 book, *The Learning Organization*, to create competitive advantage from continuing learning on both individual and collective levels (Dumaine, 1994; Solomon, 1994).

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This paper presents an ongoing case study of a learning organization implementation process at Ford Motor Company, Electrical & Fuel Handling Division (EFHD). EFHD became committed to becoming a learning organization in 1992 when it became clear to Division Manager Bob Womac, that the only competitive edge the company had was to outlearn the competition. Becoming a learning organization is one of EFHD's seven strategic imperatives. EFHD Process Leadership Manager, David Berdish states, "The reason EFHD became a learning organization was, we decided that if we were going to be competitive, we needed to learn how to deliver to the customer faster than our competition. We wanted to devote our time to being best in class and not to organizational politics."

EFHD, an automotive components manufacturer, competes for Ford business against other non-Ford companies, even though it is a division of Ford Motor Company. EFHD has over 6000 employees in 5 locations in the US, Hungary and Ireland. Prior to adopting learning organization principles and processes, EFHD's results were similar to many floundering US companies that clung onto customers and struggled with cost and quality issues.

EFHD's turn around is impressive. Since embarking on the learning organization process in 1992, with 2 learning teams involving 38 people, the process grew to incorporate 7 learning teams involving 119 employees in 1993, to its current level of 23 teams involving 520 members. EFHD's product launch success teams (PLST's), committees used to launch new products, performed consistently over budget, under quality and late with new product introductions from 1989-1992, prior to implementing the learning organization. In contrast, the 1993-1994 track record has produced product launches under budget, on-time, with quality at or better than objectives. Additionally, EFHD has developed stronger technological capability. The financial performance has also shown a dramatic turn-around. In 1991 the company lost $10 million. In 1992, EFHD broke even. 1993-1994 performance exceeded $60 million. While Berdish acknowledges that becoming a learning is not the only reason for such success, he believes it is part of the reason for EFHD's turn around. He emphasizes that, "We want to devote our time and energy to being best in class."

Business/Education Collaboration

This study evolved out of a partnership between Washtenaw Community College (WCC) and EFHD in Ann Arbor, Michigan. In January 1993, EFHD approached WCC and requested help in developing a training program that could teach the philosophy and tools espoused by Peter Senge's 1990 book *The Fifth Discipline*. WCC and EFHD collaborated to create a sixty hour training that was piloted during the summer 1994. Since that time, 120 employees have participated in the training process.

Each learning organization training session is team taught by EFHD and WCC facilitators. The training covers each of the five disciplines: personal mastery, shared vision, team learning, mental models, and systems thinking (see Figure 1). The first half of the training is
devoted to presenting the theory and practical applications of each discipline. Participants also learn systems thinking tools such as dialogue: left-hand column, hexagon technique, creative tension, ladder of inference, current reality, and causal loops, among others (see Figure 2).
Participants also learn the EFHD learning model, the company's process of capturing learning (see Figure 3).

The partnership between EFHD and WCC is designed so that the faculty helps EFHD, and EFHD helps the college learn about becoming a learning organization. The training has been expanded to offer courses to the community. The success of the process has convinced Washtenaw County Administrators, a local hospital, local schools, some Ford suppliers, and the State of Michigan Small Business Development Centers to adopt the learning organization model. To meet the demands for this new, innovative approach, WCC is in the process of creating a center for organizational learning.

Figure 1. The Five Disciplines of the Learning Organization

Personal Mastery:
A process of personal commitment to vision, excellence, and lifelong learning.
Shared Vision:
Sharing a picture of the future you want to realize together.
Mental Models:
Deeply ingrained assumptions that influence personal and organizational views and behaviors.
Team Learning:
The process of collective learning. The idea that 2 brains are smarter than 1.
Systems Thinking:
Conceptual framework that sees all parts as interrelated and affecting each other. Appreciation for wholes and connection.

Senge, P. (1990). The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization. New York: Doubleday, Currency.

Figure 2. Tools of the Learning Organization

Collaborative Learning:
The whole is grater than the sum of its parts. Engagement in team learning to solve problems, and share assumptions.
Dialogue:
Conversation based on creating understanding and a flow of meaning where assumptions can be shared without fear of repercussion and everyone is required to listen to each other.
Left Hand Column:
Signifies what people think in conversation versus what they say.
Ladder of Inference:
Tool that helps understand the thought process behind the creation of assumptions and biases that affect learning
Creative Tension:
Recognition of the tension that exists between current reality and vision.
Current Reality:
The ability to take an honest look at the current situation.
Hexagon Technique (Generate Issues):
A tool used to capture the flow of a dialogue session.
Clustering (Determine Critical Clusters):
Following a hexagon process, similar issues generated during dialogue are clustered to create a picture of the system.

EFHD Learning Process

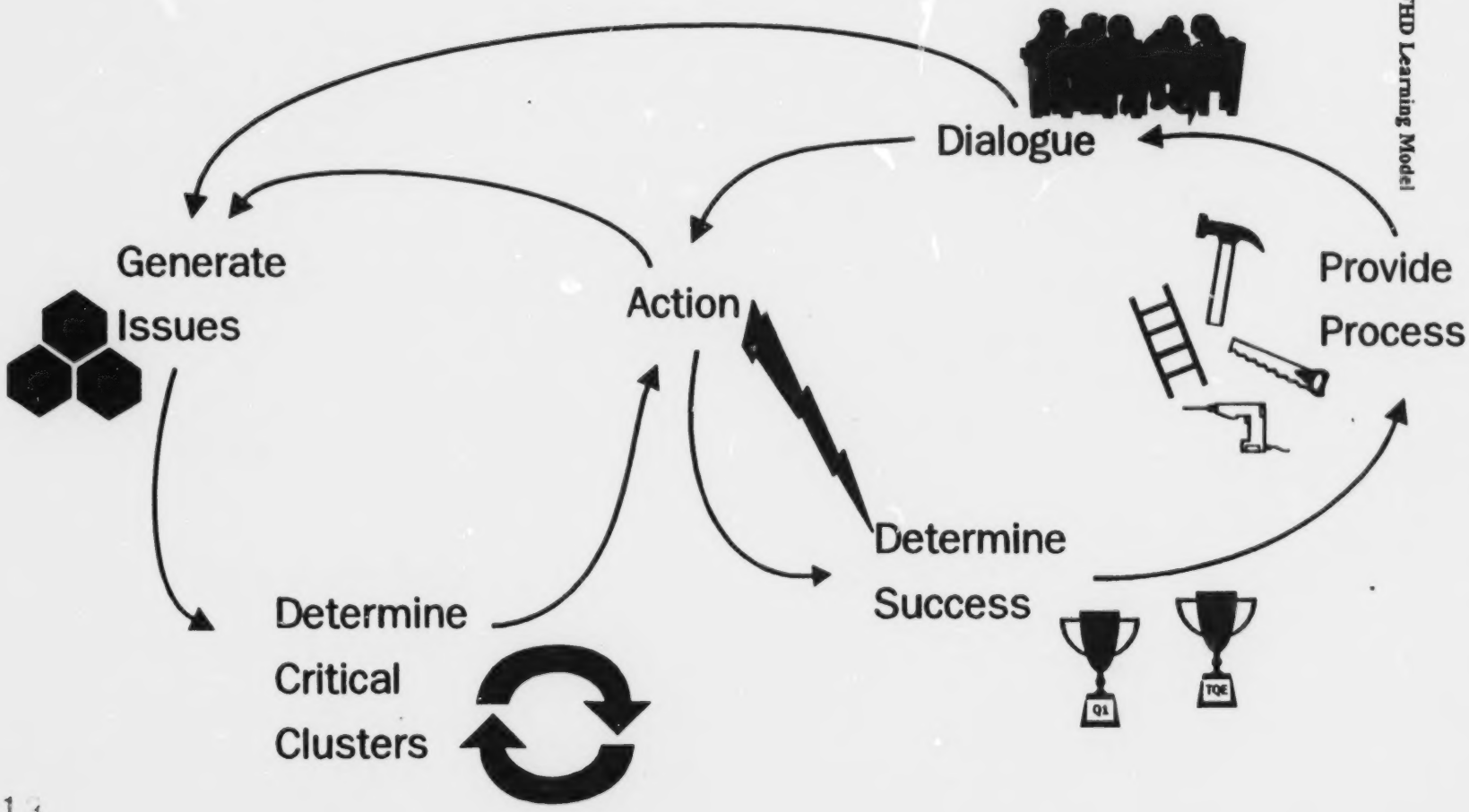

Figure 3: EFHD Learning Model

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The Problem

Although organizations such as EFHD and WCC are applying the learning organization principles, little information exists on the results of such initiatives. While designing the training, we became interested in the following questions: (1) What caused employees to participate in the learning organization training? (2) What were the results of training? (3) How did the training affect participants? and (4) What were the barriers to implementing the philosophy of the learning organization?

Methodology

Because the learning organization is grounded in systems theory, we wanted to explore the problem from a holistic perspective. Thus, adopting a qualitative descriptive case study method was most appropriate in that it is an "intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit" (Merriam, 1988, p. xiv). We wanted to understand individual and collective experience both during and after the training, and adjust future training if portions of it appeared to have less impact than desired. Additionally, case study research is based on conducting naturalistic inquiry that seeks interpretation in context of the educational experience (Merriam, 1988). As training facilitators and researchers, we were a part of the training and organizational context.

Sample Participants in the study were EFHD employees who attended the learning organization training. On the first day of the training, participants were briefed on the study and asked to participate. Nearly all participants were willing to participate. Participants range in age from 24 to 60 years old. Seniority with the company spans from 1 to 40 years. Participants were diverse with a mixed representation of gender, minority status, and rank in the company. Both UAW members, officials and management representatives attended the training together.

Data Collection To achieve a vivid account of participants' experiences, the qualitative approach employs assorted techniques for data collection. Data collection methods used included interviewing participants, participant observation, and document analysis. The documents analyzed included journal entries that participants kept voluntarily, written participant evaluations, and electronic mail generated by participants during and after the training.

The participant observation occurred primarily during the training period, which to-date totals 180 hours of classroom time. Follow-up visits were done at two of the plants participating in the implementation. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim on an ongoing basis. The research is still in process, and will continue throughout the implementation of the learning organization. To date, 17 employees have been interviewed, two have submitted journals, and 33 e-mail notes have been analyzed to collect data.

Data Analysis Data were analyzed using the constant comparative method. This involves analyzing the transcripts and observation notes with an eye for uncovering themes, or categories that suggest patterns and meanings. Merriam suggests that this method is essentially "the process of making sense out of one's data" (p. 178). An organizational learning tool, the hexagon technique, was used to analyze transcript and journal data. It involved capturing key themes and ideas in the data and clustering similar ones together. The clusters were then checked for uniqueness and named.

Findings

Preliminary findings show that attendees, all of whom participated voluntarily, attended the training for a variety of reasons. These included the desire to: learn about the learning organization; support EFHD's organizational learning specialist, Berdish; improve problem solving and decision making processes; make the business more successful; and gain a new perspective. One hourly worker attending the training commented, "I was always interested in

learning and I'm always interested in anything that will make the workplace better." Participants were also prompted to attend based on an invitation from Berdish, or the encouragement of a colleague or supervisor.

The preliminary findings show that the training impacted participants reflective capacity, sense of connection in the organization and community, level of courage to take risks, and ability to apply the philosophy and tools toward meaningful change. Barriers to smooth implementation of the organization were identified as well. Each of these will be discussed briefly.

Reflection Participants described heightened levels of reflection during and after the training. They felt more open to other viewpoints and were more acutely aware of their own biases and how they affected their interpersonal relationships both at work and in their personal lives. One woman hourly worker observed: "Well, I thought that [the classes] were great and it made you take a look at yourself. And I think that until we can see ourselves in the right light we cannot see anybody else because, I think it always starts with a personal thing. Until I can see me or see what I really am, I can't see what you are. So, I think if we start with self then we can have a better impact on the whole." A man involved in the total productive maintenance process observed that, "I think [the training] was probably a lesson for a lot of people. That was something that people will remember in terms of choosing words carefully and how people react differently."

People talked about engaging in reflection, particularly relating to achieving personal vision and fulfillment. Some described having a renewed appreciation for empathy and acceptance toward others. For instance, one participant emphasized, "I think of how this class has affected me . . . and I think that impacts the next person, because in this company they can see what I am and what it is doing for me, and it helps me to see what's going on with them. It gives us better understanding within the company for all of us to learn about what each one of us is going through."

Others had a strong motivation to improve their personal levels of effectiveness. For other participants, it confirmed what they were doing right. One woman commented, "It's such a political environment, especially with the union people. [The training] confirmed or made me happy with some of the things that I've already been doing." Many weren't sure how the training was directly helping them at work but would add, "It has helped me immensely in my personal life, which has a direct impact at work." Another participant said the training make her take a look at herself .

Connection People felt a renewed sense of connection with their work and personal community both during and following the training. One participant states, "I think individuals picked up different things, but I think as a group we recognized that we were a community and part of that is learning together." Conflict was seen by one woman with over 30 years of experience on the factory floor as "OK, because [the learning organization] helps us approach conflict as a family or a community." Another participant felt that the training helped him see how he fit into the organization as a whole. It also forced him to consider the whole picture of work and not just his particular area. He reflects, "The workshop got me to look at the whole picture. I'm not just talking about the whole picture of [my job], I'm talking about the whole picture of EFHD. . . . I can look at [the general manager] now and see where he fits in. I now know where I fit in at EFHD. . . I know where I fit in the learning organization. The workshop just reinforced that."

Other participants felt that the greatest benefit of the training was the opportunity to network and connect with employees they normally would not have a reason to connect with. A participant emphasizes, "[The] one thing that the workshop did more than anything for me, it provided a chance to communicate, it provided a chance for networking. And those are the things we need more than anything right now, communication and networking." The course helped participants make connections between life and work and continue making connections afterward. Another participant noted, "When I'm in class and you try to teach me something new, I'm, trying to make that connection, and when I don't make that connection, I don't learn." Another participant talks about connecting the training to work. He says, "I think we can make

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that connection a lot better, especially when I talk about generating mutual trust, openness and honesty and all this stuff, I think we can do that through a learning organization."

Courage Participants described having a stronger sense of courage after the workshop. They felt more willing to take risks at work and to try to implement some of the ideas and tools used in the workshop. One woman describes her work with the union following the training. "[The training] has given me the courage and I realize the only way we're going to grow and make a difference, a real difference, is if we do integrate some of the things [from the training]."

The training enhanced trust, openness, and honesty. Using the tool of dialogue--a process of suspending judgment and truly listening to one another--facilitated these feelings. People had a renewed sense of commitment and excitement to implement the learning organization. "Getting geeked," became a common phrase of participants throughout, with reference to how they felt about the ideas and prospect of implementing them at work and at home. People had more courage to learn, try and challenge the status quo. One woman stated, "I'm more willing to suggest things that I never would have risked before. I know I will be supported in this environment of learning."

Along with a stronger sense of courage came an ardent commitment to the company and learning process. Speaking about what we did in the workshop one participant notes, "I think commitment's what we did in the workshop. . . . The workshop just reinforced that. And it also reinforced for me, we have a thing around here, we're always talking about management commitment, you know, they aren't committed, but when you can go offsite for 60 hours you know, and get paid, you know that's commitment. That's commitment."

Application People reported trying some of the tools or ideas on colleagues following training. Some succeeded, others failed, but participants are unanimous in desiring additional training. The tools and ideas have been used in the product launch success teams, work teams, and the total productive maintenance process. One graduate of the training emphasizes, "Collective learning is good. I think that's the only way you're going to be able to create a world class manufacturing plant here is that we all have to learn together." People report learning more often from each other. Graduates have also attempted to practice the tools of dialogue, hexagons, and archetypes since the training. One graduate reports, "We are trying to define a learning organization ourselves. We have a monthly meeting and we are trying to learn." One woman found the tools useful in her community. She took them to the board of directors at her church. She reports observing other groups and thinking, "boy, they sure could benefit by becoming a learning organization." Others have applied the training through helping co-facilitate the learning organization implementation training that continues at the community college.

Graduates report that they feel they need more training to make the learning organization fully functional. EFHD employees haven't waited passively for formal training, however. They have sought out supplementary articles and books, and share them enthusiastically. They have created an e-mail network to share ideas and frustrations of implementing the process.

Barriers While there is great enthusiasm for the learning organization, employees cite problems with middle management commitment and often refer to it as the "clay" that efforts get caught and blocked in. Time pressures also take EFHD employees away from devoting as much time as they would like to learning organization tools. Participants still feel hampered by what they do not know, and feel they could make greater strides in the learning organization if they were more comfortable with the concepts and tools. Like any organizational change, the employees who have attempted to implement the principles in the workplace have met resistance and suspicion of yet another change tool. Despite the barriers, the energy and enthusiasm is running high, and the participants of the training are clamoring for more learning and opportunities to share successes and lessons.

Conclusions

Preliminary results of implementing the learning organization indicate that it improves individual and collective capacity to reflect, see connections within work and the community, exercise courage, and apply the concepts. At EFHD, visible results have included improved new product launches, and enhanced total preventative maintenance on machinery, and strengthened teamwork. Additionally, financial performance of the business has improved dramatically.

The findings also suggest that conducting training of this type on a large scale yields worthwhile results on both individual and collective levels. Many participants reported improved personal relationships, greater community involvement, and better interpersonal relationships at work. The strength of this HRD model is that participants have transferred the learning to both work and personal life. The link to company strategy is clear, and employees have courageously embraced the ideas and tools of the learning organization. EFHD employees are thinking in a new way, and are achieving impressive results.

The learning organization process challenges employees to use their intelligence, ability to learn, and creativity to improve the company and themselves. It helps people connect with each other and their work. It is.not a program, but rather a new process for understanding and learning together. It is the belief of EFHD and other organizations engaged in the learning organization process, that by using these tools and adopting these values they will be able to compete and dominate in ever more complex and dynamic markets.

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Coaching the Un-coachables in the Learning Organization

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This paper examines the potential of coaching as a key process within the learning organization. The paper integrates literature from three areas: the learning organization, on-the-job coaching, and individual behavior change. Effort is made to link conceptualizations of the learning organization and of coaching to performance. Special attention is given to problems of individual resistance to learning and change within the learning organization, and to coaching as a useful approach to such problems.

Learning is today's critical competency (Dixon, 1992). Organizational learning has attracted wide attention among researchers as a fruitful concept for understanding and promoting organizational transformation (Gavin, 1993; Senge, 1990; Ulrich, Jick, & Von Glinow, 1993), and for guiding human resource development (HRD) professionals (Dixon, 1992; Marsick & Watkins, 1994). Scholarship on learning organizations has been criticized as too abstract to guide the changes in specific organizational practices and policies necessary to build a learning organization (Gavin, 1993). Management actions to improve learning capabilities need to be identified and researched (Ulrich, et al., 1993). Additionally, the research literature on learning organizations can be criticized as focusing on systems and processes of learning without linking these tightly to performance.

Traditional HRD practices have been described as important components of the learning organization. The contributions of training, individual development, and organizational development are all discussed in the organizational learning literature (Brinkerhoff & Gill, 1994; Dixon, 1992; Ulrich et al., 1993). One traditional HRD practice that has received limited attention in this literature is coaching.

We define a learning organization as an organization which is skilled at systematically promoting adaptive and generative learning processes at the individual, group, and organizational levels. The outcomes of the learning organization are cognitive change, behavioral change, and performance improvement. Adaptive or single-loop learning focuses on solving current problems and adapting to the present environment without critically examining current learning strategies and practices (McGill, Slocum, & Lei, 1992). Generative or double-loop learning emphasizes continuous experimentation and feedback in an ongoing examination of the way one goes about defining and solving problems. Generative learning is conceptualized as leading to increases in the capacity to learn, and to improved performance. (Argyris, 1982; McGill, Slocum, & Lei, 1992; Mink, Owen, & Mink, 1993). Effective learning organizations must do more than learn. They must make changes in the ways work is done (Garvin, 1993). Generative learning must be linked to organizational processes and management practices in order to produce changes in behavior and performance (McGill et al., 1992).

The Learning Organization

Dixon (1992) reviewed the literature on learning at the system level in organizations from an HRD perspective and proposes adopting the concept of organizational learning as a way to reframe the topic. She also discusses the implications of this topic for HRD professionals. Organizational learning refers to learning at the system rather than individual level. Dixon organizes the literature around five elements of organizational learning: information acquisition, information distribution and interpretation, making meaning, organizational memory, and information retrieval.

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Dixon's definition of organizational learning relies on Duncan and Weiss (1979). Organizational learning is the process by which knowledge about action outcome relationships between the organization and the environment is developed. In this definition learning is viewed as a process, and its focuses is the organizational (system) level of learning. While learning within an organization occurs through individuals, know-how can reside both in individuals and in shared understandings of a group. According to Dixon, HRD professionals have substantial technology for improving individual learning, but lack an equivalent technology to address organizational learning.

McGill, Slocum, and Lei (1992) describe two organizational learning styles, generative and adaptive. Generative learning is a characteristic of learning organizations. This is the style of learning referred to by Argyris (1982) as double-loop learning. Generative learning alone is insufficient for organizational success. Internal processes and management practices must be reconceptualized and redesigned to reflect new understandings. Managers may have to unlearn mindsets associated with previous training and reward systems. Key dimensions of managerial practice in the learning organization are openness, systemic thinking, creativity, personal efficacy and empathy.

Garvin (1993) is critical of scholars whose discussions of learning organizations are too abstract to guide the changes in specific practices and policies necessary to build a learning organization. Philosophy, themes and metaphor are poor guides to practice. Garvin offers a specific definition, guidelines for practice, and recommendations for ways to measure organizational learning. According to Garvin, a clear definition of organizational learning is still needed despite years research and discussion. Garvin defines a learning organization as an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights. (p.80). Organizational learning can be traced through three overlapping stages: cognitive, behavioral, and performance improvement. Learning organizations are skilled at five main activities: systematic problem solving, experimentation with new approaches, learning from past experience, learning from the experiences and best practices of others, and transferring knowledge quickly and efficiently throughout the organization.

Watkins and Marsick(1993) present a broad vision of the learning organization and propose sculpting as a useful metaphor. They define the learning organization as one that learns continuously and can transform itself. It empowers its people, encourages collaboration and team learning, promotes open dialogue, and acknowledges the interdependence of individuals, the organization, and the communities in which people reside. Learning is seen as continuous and running parallel to work. Employees develop habits of learning. Learning is planned for and supported throughout the organization. Watkins and Marsick focus their discussion on processes of learning, rather than on outcomes. In a subsequent work (Marsick & Watkins, 1994) the authors offer their conceptualization of the learning organization as an integrative vision for the field of HRD. They characterize learning organizations as having: 1) the ability to recognize and change mental models, 2) organizational structures and norms which promote personal efficacy, 3) a culture of collaboration and partnership, and 4) a culture of trust and mutual respect.

Ulrich, Jick, and Von Glinow (1993) offer specific ways managers can build learning capabilities into their organizations. These include generating a large number of learning opportunities, generalizing learning beyond individuals, and enhancing the desire and opportunities to learn from others. They specifically recommend teaching leaders to coach, facilitate, and teach as techniques to increase organizational learning capability.

From the Learning Organization to Coaching

As we have seen, recent literature on learning organizations has recognized the need to examine specific managerial and HRD practices as ways to operationalize the literature's more abstract conceptualizations of a learning organization. Coaching is a specific workplace learning technology discussed in the management and HRD literature. On-the-job coaching is a technology which links learning closely to performance. For these reasons, we believe that it is important to examine the potential of coaching as a key process within the learning organization.

We define coaching as a process of on-the-job learning facilitated by a one-on-one coaching relationship and resulting in cognitive change, behavioral change, and performance improvement. Coaching focuses primarily on immediate job duties and produces both adaptive and generative

learning. Formal coaching occurs when a superior coaches a subordinate. Most of the coaching literature discussed here discusses managerial coaching and so deals with formal coaching. Informal coaching occurs when a coworker or other non-supervisor assumes the coaching role.

Coaching occurs within a relationship of trust and acceptance. The individual must be motivated both to learn and to improve performance. The individual must also accept and respond to the coach. The coach must be motivated to help develop, not control, the individual. Coaching focuses on action and performance improvement, not just learning. It involves preparation and practice, and relies on effective communication. Finally, effective coaching promotes generative learning by helping the individual identify and address "blind spots" or ways in which the individual's actions produce unanticipated and unwanted results.

The coaching process involves a cycle of five steps. In practice these tend to occur simultaneously. The steps are: 1) planning for learning and performance, 2) observing behavior, 3) providing feedback, 4) inquiring for understanding, and 5) motivating performance. The first step involves forming a mutual commitment to the coaching relationship, and then identifying a job-related issue to focus the coaching activity. In observing behavior and providing feedback the coach seeks to help the individual identify "blind spots." These are unanticipated and unwanted results produced by the individual's choices and actions. In the process of inquiry, the coach facilitates and confirms the individual's insight, analysis, and problem solving skills. The last step, motivation, is often intrinsic to the process of learning and performance improvement. At times, especially early in the coaching process, the coach may need to draw attention to the benefits of learning and change, and to provide motivation. The benefits of learning and performance change must be perceived as worth the effort.

We follow Mink et al. (1993) in distinguishing coaching from counseling and from mentoring. Coaching, counseling and mentoring are three distinct processes which differ in time horizon, content, and focus. Coaching is concerned with the short to intermediate term, involves job-related learning, and focuses on learning and/or development for the current or future job. An individual may have several coaches simultaneously, for example, if learning several new job functions. Counseling is typically short term, but varies. It involves remedies for motivational or attitude problems, may be remedial or developmental, and can involve life issues beyond the job. Mentoring is mainly concerned with the long term. It involves career, family roles, and current performance that is future-related. Mentoring is typically developmental, and often covers current and future career decisions. Mentoring relationships tend to be exclusive. An individual normally has only one mentor.

The Importance of Coaching

Peters and Austin (1985) recommend coaching as a means of empowering individuals to put forth their best efforts and utilize more of their abilities in their work. Kanter (1983) recommends, as a strategy for creating a climate of productivity, that companies encourage their managers to adopt new roles to increase employee participation.

Fournies (1978), in a widely-read work, offers a prescriptive definition of coaching. He sees coaching as a process for improving problem work performance. His book is a practical guide to coaching, and assumes that the manager acts as the coach. Fournies conceives of coaching as much more that the facilitation of learning. By his definition, coaching involves two steps: 1) identifying unsatisfactory performance and analyzing the reasons for it (coaching analysis), and 2) face-to-face discussion of the situation to facilitate change in a subordinate's performance. Fournies provides a flow-chart to guide performance analysis (p.132). Coaching actions can include providing feedback, work planning, removing obstacles to performance, providing training or practice to the subordinate, or changing consequences for performance. The face-to-face discussion involves five steps: 1) getting agreement that a problem exists, 2) mutually discussing alternative solutions, 3) mutually agreeing on action to be taken to solve the problem, 4) follow up to measure results, and 5.)recognizing achievement when it occurs.

Evered and Selman (1989) discuss the evolution of the concept of formal coaching within the management literature. The concept of coaching first appeared in the literature during the 1950s. Development of subordinates was recognized as a management responsibility. Coaching occurred within the context of a hierarchical relationship, and stressed improving the employees' immediate job skills. Evered and Selman define coaching as a managerial process which improves individual

performance. They see good coaching as an essential feature of effective management, and suggest coaching as a new management paradigm. In their view, "a management paradigm based on building an organizational context for coaching can readily outperform the existing management paradigm based on control" (p.16). The authors propose that creating an organizational culture for coaching become a core managerial activity. Coaching is seen not as a subset, but as the heart of management. This involves a shift from controlling performance to enabling and improving performance.

According to the authors, the problem with coaching as a managerial control function is that it acts as a barrier to employee development and performance improvement. At best it results in compliance to the current performance standard. At worst it can trigger employee resentment and resistance. The authors recommend their new conceptualization of coaching as a means of empowering individuals to put forth their best efforts and utilize more of their abilities in their work. They see this as being accomplished by redefining coaching as a relationship focused on improving employee performance, and moving it outside the context of superior-subordinate relationships. Coaching is characterized by a committed partnership between employee and coach, a focus on action and improvement beyond prior performance levels, effective communication as the means to such a new relationship, non-judgmental acceptance, willingness to coach and be coached, and practice and preparation. The coach's job is to identify and employee's "blind spots" and to help employees see aspects of their performance which they would not otherwise be able to see.

Orth, Wilkerson, and Benfari (1987) define coaching as the "day-to-day, hands-on process of helping employees recognize opportunities to improve their performance and capabilities (p. 67)." The authors recognize the need for a positive, trusting relationship between employee and coach. They identify four critical coaching skills as observation, analysis, questioning, and feedback.

Graham, Wedman, and Garvin-Kester (1993) evaluated the effectiveness of a coaching skills program for sales managers. They found that key coaching skills of clarifying performance expectations, providing feedback, using relevant information, observing behavior with clients, and rewarding performance can be developed through a combination of training and on-the-job follow-up. These same authors continued their study of coaching skills in a subsequent article (Graham, Wedman & Garvin-Kester, 1994). In this study they identified specific behaviors that employees associate with managers who successfully and unsuccessfully apply coaching skills. These behaviors related to a manager's ability to identify clear performance expectations, provide accurate feedback, offer suggestions to improve performance, and develop warm working relationships with employees being coached. The authors summarize their findings by noting that

> "...the more insightful, genuine, and specific managers could be, the more effective they were perceived to be ...Successful coaches were those who were good communicators, were perceptive, could set clear expectations for their employees, could see the big picture, went out of their way to seek rewards for their employees, gave useful advice, and had good people skills. These managers were constantly in touch with their staff and their professional development needs" (p. 91).

The authors describe coaching as extending beyond the typical notion of managing and control. Coaching means creating an climate of mutual respect, ongoing observation and feedback, trust, and a focus on improving performance. To be effective, coaching involves being ethical, clear about the purpose of and activity, committed to the personal success of the worker, focused on continuous communication, honest, and aware of the overall picture.

Coaching and the Learning Organization

Mink, Owen, and Mink (1993) discuss coaching in the context of development of the learning organization. They see the role of coach as central to such an organization. Coaching is defined as a qualitative relationship resulting in learning. "Coaching is the process by which one individual, the coach, creates enabling relationships with others that make it easier for them to learn" (p.2). It is the coaching relationship which enables the learner to develop. Coaching results in the adoption

of new skills, knowledge, and/or values and attitudes. Coaching increases confidence and sense of control. The authors label this outcome as empowerment. Coaching occurs on the individual level, even when the context is a team or group. Successful coaching is based on mutual trust, acceptance, and respect. Coaching results in transformation of the learner, as he or she is increasingly able to perform at higher and more complex levels. This involves adopting new mental models and structures. Coaching results in greater learner self-direction and self-management.

Mink et al. contrast a traditional control-oriented, prescriptive coaching approach with the new approach they label empowerment. The problem with the traditional approach is that performance may conform to expectations of the coach, but will not exceed it. This approach reduces individual initiative and does not produce sustained improvement. Mink et al's. model of coaching is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Prescription versus Empowerment Models of Coaching

Prescription Model	Empowerment Model
Gives goals	Develops consensus about goals
Defines roles	Lets roles evolve
Writes procedures	Lets procedures evolve
Controls behavior	Emphasizes quality as a way of life
Evaluates performance	Focuses on ways to improve processes
Directs	Collaborates
Relies on extrinsic motivation (e.g., fear)	Increases initiative and internal motivation

(Mink, Owen, & Mink, 1993, p.5)

Coaches play a key role in the learning organization by developing a high-performance climate in five ways: 1) providing leadership that values and supports learning and growth by building commitment to shared values and modeling the core values of the organization, 2) getting the right people into the organization--people with the capacity needed to do the work, and people who identify with the values of the organization, 3) empowering associates by giving them a high degree of autonomy, 4) making teamwork a norm within the organization through example, and by promoting collaboration, and 5) supporting accomplishment by removing constraints to better performance.

Mink, Owen & Mink discuss new coaching roles, skills, and tools necessary for the learning organization. They base these on Senge's discussion of learning organizations (Senge, 1990) The coach helps associates see how their assumptions act as constraints on performance. This frees the associates to become more productive contributors. This is an essential step to generative learning.

The Un-coachable Employee

We are operationalizing the *un-coachable* employee, or *player*, as someone who is unsuccessful in achieving behavioral changes and a higher level of performance, despite receiving feedback and direction in the context of a coaching relationship. In coaching the *un-coachable*, coaching strategies delineated earlier such as: 1) planning for learning and performance, 2) observing behavior, 3) providing feedback, 4) inquiring for understanding, and 5) motivating performance,

may need to be finely tuned in addition to more *advanced* analytical strategies. When coaching someone who has had a history of inadequate performance it may also be critical to consider volition or meta-cognitive processes, the player's knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs), their need for achievement (nAch), and the *player's* attitude regarding organizational context variables such as supervision, compensation, security, etc.

Most coaching models contain motivation as a important strategy in the coaches arsenal of behavioral change drivers. Motivation is a construct that is not observable directly, and unlike dimensions of personality, motivation is not stable over time. Motivation is best viewed as a dependent variable that is activated by environmental factors. It is related to outcomes that manifest themselves in the following dependent variables: 1) intensity, 2) direction (what workers choose to do), 3) persistence, and 4) termination of action. In work settings, it is a summary label referring to person and situation determinants of action (Steers and Porter, 1987). Motivation is also a general term that refers to both *goal choice* and *goal striving* (Kanfer, 1993).

A significant amount of literature exists regarding the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards on motivation. Generally intrinsic rewards are those that are derived through the satisfaction one experiences through work itself, and extrinsic rewards are those that are bestowed by the organization in the form tangible rewards and praise. Both types of rewards are important to the coach attempting to effect performance.

The scientific study of motivation has been primarily focused on behavioral approaches dating back to the work of John Watts (1913). Coaching models emphasizing the need to motivate players primarily focus on extrinsic rewards such as praise, and financial rewards. Early management theories, such as Taylor's Scientific Management Theory, make reference to the strategy of increasing motivation and performance through financial compensation systems that link wage incentives directly to performance by paying a set rate for each output produced (Taylor, 1911).

While many of today's compensation systems are more complex, the principle of tying wages directly to performance is still widely adhered to. "Depending on the size and type of the organizations surveyed and the way the question is framed, recent estimates of the number of U.S. companies using some form of incentive or merit-pay plan range from 75 to 94 percent, and many of these programs apparently have just been adopted during the last few years" (Kohn, 1993, p.13). Annual incentive plans for management were offered in 92 percent of manufacturing companies (Halachmi and Holtzer, 1987, p. 80).

However, in most instances the use of financial incentives is beyond the control of coaches in the learning organization. In addition, while behavioral programs incorporating financial incentives are strongly linked to controlling workers in terms of their goal choice, there is considerable evidence that this fundamental carrot-and-stick approach to motivation is not effective in increasing goal striving or performance (Kohn, 1993). In addition, where extrinsic rewards have been applied in work environments and inadvertently rewarded poor performance, they have been shown to have a negative impact on intrinsic motivation and performance (Rummel & Feinberg, 1988). In learning organizations coaches working with players who have been unsuccessful in improving performance, should consider intrinsic motivation practices as a means of effecting behavioral outcomes and performance.

A common method employed to increase intrinsic motivation is job enrichment practices. In the mid-1900s the importance of task characteristics was discovered that led to the exploration of the motivating potential of jobs. This led to the development of interventions aimed at enhancing intrinsic motivation and performance through job redesign.

Intrinsic motivation is defined as motivation derived from no apparent reward except from the task itself (Deci (1971). However, in efforts to increase performance through job redesign the player's job-relevant knowledge and skill, need for achievement (nAch), and level of satisfaction with aspects of the work context e.g. job security, compensation, co-workers, and supervision should be considered (Hackman & Oldham, 1980, p. 88). These player characteristics interact with job redesign interventions and should be considered by coaches attempting to increase the intrinsic motivation and performance of unsuccessful *un-coachable* employees.

Job redesign studies demonstrate that jobs with low skill variety, that do not involve a completed whole piece of work with an identifiable output, and that involve tasks with low significance have very little potential to provide the worker with the experience of *meaningfulness of the work*, and intrinsic motivation (Hackman & Oldham, 1980, p. 77). Other critical job characteristics which effect intrinsic motivation are autonomy and feedback. Jobs that provide

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autonomy allow the worker to experience responsibility for outcomes of the work. Feedback provides knowledge of the actual results of the work. However, jobs designed to provide a high level of intrinsic motivation must be paired with workers who have a moderate to high need to achieve, are capable of doing the work, and are satisfied with their job context variables.

These *player* factors, are important to coaches attempting to effect performance because they interact with work re-design strategies aimed at intrinsically motivating workers. If a job is designed to provide a high level of intrinsic motivation, and it is paired with an employee who does not have the capacity (KSAs) to do well in the job, great dissatisfaction will be derived from doing poorly with a negative impact on motivation and performance. If, on the other hand, it is paired with a worker who does have adequate KSA's, increases in motivation and performance will likely occur providing the worker has moderate to high level of nAch, and is satisfied with the work environment.

In the coaching relationship where the player has had a history of failing to improve performance it is important for the coach to begin eliminating possible causes of poor performance. When a coach is attempting to increase intrinsic motivation, the worker's general satisfaction with the work environment should be assessed. Aspects of the work *context* such as adequate pay, supervision, job security, and peer support may affect their willingness or ability to take advantage of the opportunities for achievement provided by the work redesign (Hackman & Oldham, 1980, p. 92). In fact, a negative relationship between performance and enriched jobs exists for workers who are dissatisfied with the *context* of their jobs and who also have low need to achieve.

Coaches in the learning organization need to be aware of the constraints that will impact the success the coach and player are able to achieve. Job design and *player* characteristics are two sets of possible constraints.

Volition and self-regulating behaviors are additional variables a coach working with an *un-coachable player* should examine. Volition is defined as the self-regulatory processes that people use to govern themselves to make something they want happen. It is associated with the mobilization of effort. Often coaches are unsuccessful in improving the *player's* performance because the *player* is unable to apply the effort required to achieve. Consequently, volition is often a critical variable in coaching situations. Increased volition can result through knowledge about ones actions, and the implementation of strategies to control thinking. These strategies are referred to as *meta-cognitive* processes. Examining these self-regulating processes in the coaching situation can often result in significant improvements in performance.

An example of a self-regulatory process is a schedule a employee develops to ensure that adequate time is committed to a particular task. However, this process may be compromised by continuous or repeated procrastination. In this instance of a pattern of maladaptive behaviors, procrastination may be viewed as a self-defeating behavior (SDB). Cudney and Hardy operationalize self-defeating behavior as negative and couterproductive thoughts and actions that are practiced responses to new situations (1993). They define self-defeating behaviors as "an action or attitude that once worked to help an individual cope with a hurtful experience but that now works against the individual to keep him or her from responding to new moments in a productive way" (p.11). Some examples of typical SDB,s include procrastination, defensiveness, compulsive ritualistic actions, suspiciousness, cynicism, controlling, and obsessive worrying.

As a coach who has been unsuccessful in eliminating or modifying a self-defeating behavior such as procrastination, it may be effective to increase the player's awareness of their own actions, and the development of strategies to control their unconscious (automatic) thinking around these behaviors. Increasing the awareness of these behaviors and *meta-cognitive* processes can help a player become more effective by eliminating behaviors that are no longer effective in their present situation.

In a coaching context Cudney and Hardy recommend this process entail helping a *un-coachable* player identify: 1) their self-defeating behavioral patterns, 2) the negative consequences associated with these behaviors, 3) the environmental factors which trigger these patterns, 4) the irrational fear around eliminating these behaviors, 5) the identification of high performance alternative behaviors and, 6) implementation strategies for these new behaviors (1993).

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Conclusion

This paper examined the role of coaching in the learning organization in an attempt to better understand the complexities associated with the cognitive and behavioral changes that lead to increased organizational performance. We defined the learning organization as an organization which is skilled at systematically promoting adaptive and generative learning processes at the individual, group, and organizational levels. While the coaching process is often cited as critical in learning organizations, most coaching models are inadequate in helping coaches develop strategies to help employees who are not successful in improving their performance. This paper presented several strategies a coach might employ in working with the *un-coachable player*. They included practices which focused on increasing intrinsic motivation. These interventions addressed task variables, autonomy and feedback, and how they interacted with the *player's* need for achievement and attitude towards organizational context variables. Another set of strategies revolved around volition, and the importance of the coach being able to help the *player* identify and replace patterns of self-defeating behaviors with behaviors.

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Feedback Seeking Behavior: A Review of the Literature from the HRD Perspective

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This article explores theoretical and empirical research on feedback seeking behavior. Individual and situational factors affecting feedback seeking are considered, as well as the effects of feedback seeking on the individual and the organization. Obstacles to feedback seeking are discussed in the light of intervention possibilities. The author then focuses on a variety of resulting implications as they relate to training and organization development practices.

Just over a decade after its conceptual inception (or revival, since early feedback research has implicitly acknowledged its importance (e.g., Arps, 1917)), feedback seeking behavior (FSB) has evolved into a well developed construct in the fields of organizational behavior and social and occupational psychology. Grounding their interest on a strongly founded premise that feedback has a significant effect on individual and organizational performance (Ilgen, Fisher & Taylor, 1979; Nadler, 1979; Pearce & Porter, 1986), Ashford and Cummings (1983) transferred the ball into the seeker's court, thus denying the prevailing assumption that individuals are passive recipients of feedback (e.g., Ilgen et al., 1979). They proposed that individuals proactively seek feedback in order to have more control over the outcomes of their behavior. This new path in approach to feedback implicitly questioned the traditional view of feedback as a tool for managers to use to influence the behavior of their subordinates. Ashford subsequently identified FSB as a "conscious devotion of effort toward determining the correctness and adequacy of behaviors for attaining valued end states" (Ashford, 1986, p. 466).

Based on a comprehensive literature review, this article will summarize the effects associated with FSB and outline its individual and situational predictors. Typologies of feedback and other types of information will be included as seems necessary. Two special cases of FSB - newcomer FSB and FSB in groups - will be discussed. Corresponding implications for HRD practice will be the focus of the final section.

Why is Feedback Seeking Important?

In their pivotal work, Ashford and Cummings (1983) argued that FSB is an important individual resource for resolving feelings of ambiguity and uncertainty. They postulated that feedback seeking reduces uncertainty about behaviors, as well as how these behaviors are evaluated by others. The authors also assumed that feedback seeking played an important role in clarifying relative importance of diverse goals, as well as in helping employees to assess their personal competence in regard to a task. They concluded that FSB is an appropriate and instrumental response to the environment. Ashford and Tsui (1991) added that seeking feedback represents the essence of the discrepancy-reduction process, and suggested that it may be the most crucial aspect of a manager's self-regulation framework. Feedback seeking has also been found to represent an effective method of affect regulation among high anxious individuals (Battmann, 1988). Some results show that feedback seeking enhances observers' impressions of superior performers (e.g., Ashford & Northcraft, 1992). Ilgen and Moore (1987) found that the individuals with a choice to seek feedback took shorter time to complete the task in comparison to their peers who were only given feedback.

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Finally, given the fact that individuals are often reluctant to give negative feedback (Larson, 1984), it is argued that feedback seeking can shorten the process of a gradual buildup of anger and resentment in the feedback provider (Larson, 1989).

While appealing and useful, feedback seeking can also prove to be costly. The original article (Ashford & Cummings, 1983) identified the relationship between the feedback seeker and feedback giver in terms of the three primary costs implicitly or explicitly taken into account in actively seeking feedback. These are: inference costs which point to history, motives and feelings of the feedback giver; face loss costs accounting for the possibility of loss of esteem and of revealing potentially damaging information during the contact; and effort costs relating to the physical availability of the feedback giver and familiarity of the giver with the seeker's behavior and its complexity.

Not Only Performance Feedback: Extended Typology

Although much of the feedback and feedback seeking literature has focused on performance feedback, the information environment of an active information seeker is comprised of many other types of useful and relevant information. Review of proposed typologies seems appropriate at this point, because it will enable us to look for more diverse practical solutions.

In a thorough literature review, Van Dyne (1994) suggested that the following three aspects of feedback need to be fully defined: (1) timing; (2) content; and (3) temporal focus. Thus feedback typology would include: retrospective and prospective feedback depending on whether or not prospective job requirements were included in feedback (temporal focus); and performance and social feedback that can be complemented with other types of information such as technical or normative (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993a), as these prove to be a relevant part of the content of an individual's information environment. However, it is necessary to distinguish feedback from information in that it is always based on past events, that it is more focused on specific human targets, and that it is therefore more enhancing or hurtful to one's ego (Mullen, 1994). Timing is an important factor in differentiating between expectations and feedback since the latter refers only to the communication based on past behavior which occurs after the behavior occurs (Van Dyne, 1994, p. 8).

Other typologies are based on criteria such as feedback sign (positive and negative feedback) and context in which we can differentiate between process and outcome feedback. Concluding on their empirical work, Earley, Northcraft, Lee and Lituchy (1990) described outcome feedback as the one that provides only the information on performance outcomes, while process feedback is provided to facilitate subordinate's search for successful task strategies. Finally, the number of recipients involved provides another useful tool for classification. Differentiation is made between individual and group feedback (Nadler, 1979). The uniqueness of group setting will also be addressed in this review in the context of FSB.

Probing Deeper: Why Do Individuals Seek Feedback?

The complexity of the motives for seeking feedback has been recognized in a variety of empirical and conceptual work. The picture is complicated by the fact that feedback seeking is not a fully rational process, as well as by frequent occurrences of conflict between different motives (Morrison & Bies, 1991).

One of the strong motives for FSB briefly mentioned earlier is the individual's desire to protect his or her ego and self esteem (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Steele, 1988). Larson (1989) suggested that this motive often influences the choice of timing and content as well as inquiry strategy of feedback seeking.

It appears that the feedback once received can raise as many questions, as it does answers (Fedor, 1990). Indeed, Fedor, Rensvold and Adams (1992) found that the uncertainty about earlier feedback can be a strong motivator for feedback seeking. Some of the questions that might remain unanswered by the feedback provider are: what does the message really

mean?; what are the intentions behind it?; what is the type of information that is being provided?; and how does it differ from my expectations? (Fedor et al., 1992, p. 81). Ashford and Cummings (1985) have also found that an individual's level of tolerance for ambiguity may affect his or her FSB. In the subsequent study, Bennett, Herold and Ashford (1990) found that the job-related portion of the intolerance, rather than general intolerance, motivates the seeking of job-specific feedback.

Another line of research has revolved around the impression management phenomenon as a significant determinant of feedback seeking. It has been posited and found that individuals often seek (or do not seek) feedback because of the impression that it makes on others (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Morrison & Bies, 1991). The public image concern has been a subject of extensive research in many fields. For this review it will suffice to acknowledge that the more public the behavior of an individual, the more concerned that individual will be with how he or she appears to others (Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

Recent outlook on motives for FSB has involved an individual's goal orientation. VandeWalle (1993) grounded his research on Dweck's (1986) distinction between individuals with learning goals as those who focus on improving their ability and individuals with performance goals as those who focus on proving their ability. He proposed that individuals with learning orientation put forth more effort to seek feedback, even under challenging task conditions, and even if their ability to achieve the task is seen as poor.

Finally, feedback is most often sought simply to obtain information about one's evaluations, social standing or comparison, as well as about details of routine performance. Although simple, such motives are, however, usually confounded by some of the other motives mentioned above, which contributes to their complexity.

Situational Influences

Organizational norms have been found to influence individuals' FSB. Ashford and Northcraft (1991), for example, have found that individuals use norms about typical FSB as cues, in their decision making in regard to feedback seeking frequency. Norms are also related to social expectations that may enhance or inhibit feedback seeking.

The nature of previously obtained feedback may also have a strong influence on the subsequent FSB (Morrison & Cummings, 1992). It is unlikely that frequent negative evaluations will enhance a performer's feedback seeking. Likewise, an individual's recent performance may show as a strong predictor of future FSB (Fedor et al., 1992).

The credibility of the feedback source has been shown to influence feedback seeking (Fedor et al., 1992). Also, the Ang, Cummings, Straub and Earley's (1993) findings suggest that the feedback giver's mood is strongly related to the frequency of feedback seeking. Recent theoretical research postulates that a superior's perceived leadership style is also related to the type and frequency of information sought by a subordinate (Madzar, 1994).

How do Individuals Seek Feedback in Organizational Settings?

Ashford and Cummings (1983) distinguished between two feedback seeking strategies, monitoring and inquiry. While inquiry is described as direct asking of a potential source, monitoring is regarded as a process of meaning construction. It is comprised of observing the given environment, looking for cues useful for feedback. An individual may observe direct or indirect cues, i.e., those that refer to remarks others make about them, or those that come from actions or situations not directly related to the individual. Ashford and Tsui (1991) found that managers used inquiry and monitoring of direct cues more frequently with superiors than with peers or subordinates. The findings also show that indirect cue monitoring was used equally often with all three groups. At this point it seems necessary to emphasize that, although most of the literature to date has focused on subordinates' FSB, feedback seeking also occurs in the other direction, as well as between peers. Some recent studies have investigated this reverse relationship (Ashford and Tsui, 1991; Mullen, 1994). Recent research

on mentor-protege relationship, for example, suggests that the protege can serve as a valuable source of information for the mentor. Further, obtaining such information may result in benefits such as technical skill maintenance, enhanced-self esteem and recognition for the mentor (Mullen, 1994, p. 194). These and similar studies are most welcome in the ongoing effort to create a better picture of the more general feedback environment.

Two Special Cases of Feedback Seeking: Newcomers and Groups

Feedback seeking has a particularly important function in the life of new entrants during the period of their organizational socialization. It is thus treated here as a special case of feedback seeking in which seeking of other information types has also been discussed in the existing literature. Feedback seeking in group settings also has some specificities that deserve separate attention.

Newcomer Information Seeking In the recent longitudinal investigation of newcomer proactivity, Morrison (Morrison, 1993a; Morrison, 1993b) witnessed newcomers' active involvement in the socialization process. She found that they used monitoring more frequently than inquiry in their information seeking. For technical information, however, they used mainly inquiry, and sought it from their supervisors. Otherwise, they preferred peers as a feedback source. Over time, they sought less normative information and social feedback, but more referent information and performance feedback. Overall, the frequency of information seeking was stable. Finally, she found that the more information the newcomers sought, the more satisfied they were, less inclined to leave their jobs and, the better was their performance.

Miller and Jablin (1991) also explored a variety of means newcomers use to seek various types of information. These vary in their specificity, overtness and range from overt and indirect questions, to going through third party, testing the "limits", engaging in disguising conversations, to observing and surveillance.

Feedback Seeking in Groups The literature reviewed up until now has mainly reflected on feedback seeking as an individual and ultimately organizational resource. Robinson and Weldon (1993) considered the process of feedback seeking when people work in groups. They suggested that the following four dimensions of feedback seeking seem particularly salient for groups: level of feedback sought -individual or group; if feedback is sought publicly or privately; if feedback is sought from a social or non-social source (human or non-human); and if the feedback is sought from the social source, whether that source is external or internal to the group.

The following, according to these authors, are the motives for feedback seeking in groups: self-assessment; self-validation; enhanced group performance; increased group morale; increased individual status in the group, and impression management. The authors argue that, for example, in order to improve group morale, feedback seeking will occur at the group level, a social and internal source will be used, and the seeking will be private. For the purposes of self validation, on the other hand, feedback is sought at the individual level if the person thinks he or she is performing better than the group, and at the group level in case of a reverse assumption. Social and internal source is used in feedback seeking, through a public or private channel, depending on the level. Finally, the authors posited that both accurate and biased feedback seeking can contribute to the fulfillment of these motives.

The work of Robinson and Weldon represents an isolated effort in the FSB literature to consider a group as a level of analysis. Although important as a theoretical contribution, this work has not been followed by collection of empirical evidence of proposed relationships.

Obstruction of Feedback Seeking

The review of the feedback seeking literature highlights the importance and benefits of feedback seeking to both the individual and he organization. It has been claimed that failure to seek diagnostic feedback may have a detrimental impact on the goal setting process

(Morrison & Weldon, 1990) and on managerial effectiveness (Ashford & Tsui, 1991). The ultimate consequences may be reflected in reduced accuracy and fairness of the performance appraisal process (Morrison & Bies, 1991). This section is designed to point out some of the more obvious organizational constraints to feedback seeking, based on the findings in the literature.

In a traditional supervisor-subordinate relationship, supervisor feedback obstruction (i.e., supervisor was inaccessible, or subordinates perceived high risk of directly asking a supervisor for feedback) has been found to cause anxiety, dissatisfaction and even turnover intent among subordinates (Walsh, Ashford & Hill, 1985). Another powerful constraint may be the inhibiting effect of an evaluative audience. Ashford and Northcraft (1992) suggested that :

> feedback-seeking will be more constrained in organizations where assessments of an employee's general character are informally collected from a variety of sources (e.g., peers and subordinates) and incorporated into formal performance appraisals. In such situations, peers and subordinates become an evaluative audience, and their presence is, therefore, likely to constrain performers' feedback seeking efforts. (p. 321)

Impression management costs can influence those who need feedback most (i. e., poor performers) to decide not to seek it. Thus, in settings that do not account for this effect, poor performers will rarely seek the feedback they need to improve. The possibility that asking will be interpreted as a sign of weakness, uncertainty, or lack of self-confidence will contribute to their decision (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992). Also, impression management will lead to the situations in which individuals will seek feedback that is image enhancing rather than diagnostic. This, in turn, may lead to inaccurate self-assessment (Morrison & Bies, 1991).

In certain situations and in certain professions, people cannot ask for feedback and are also less than ready to trust feedback that they spontaneously receive. Ashford and Cummings (1983) placed organization development (OD) consultants in this group "because of their particular relationships with those who have potential to offer feedback" (p. 394). To answer questions such as "Is the client responding?" or "Have I lowered resistance to change?", an OD consultant will have to rely on monitoring and interpretation of most reliable situational cues. Along similar lines, the obstacle that top managers often face is that they become surrounded by so called yes-men. They may experience what Ashford (1989) referred to as "unique problems" (p. 150) if they attempt to get feedback from the people at lower levels in the organizational hierarchy.

Another obvious obstacle is the difficulty in differentiating between feedback and other cues in the surrounding environment. It is often the case that managers give cues that are mistaken for feedback by their subordinates (Ashford, 1986), since subordinates intuitively look for feedback in almost all actions performed by their managers. Somewhat related to this obstacle is the management style, or temporary affect that may discourage a subordinate from seeking feedback.

Finally, social expectations and communication norms can generate reluctance to feedback seeking. Morrison (1992), for example, suggested that the newcomers sought less technical information over time because it was socially less accepted, i.e., they were supposed "to have learned the ropes" (Ashford & Cummings, 1985, p. 77). Although important, norms were not found to be as strong a distraction as impression management or inhibitive audience (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Mullen, 1994). However, norms can indirectly affect the choice of a medium for feedback seeking (e.g., computer versus face-to-face), and encourage the use of the medium that might not be the preferred communication tool for the employees.

Implications for HRD Practice: Focus on Training and Organization Development

The following represents a summary of recommendations for the improvement of the existing HRD practices in training and organization development, based on the findings and

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assumptions discussed so far.

Enhancing Feedback Seeking via Training As feedback seeking is an important resource to all organizational members, many recommendations will apply to training programs for all audiences. Some recommendations pertain only to management training.

First, the findings that this literature review has shared with this journal's readers should be shared, in a more user-friendly form with all trainees. It is of particular importance that they: appreciate the benefits of feedback seeking; realize that they can use different strategies for seeking information; differentiate among various types of information and feedback available; become aware of potential obstacles in seeking feedback; and, finally, relate their individual motivations to seek information to the goals of the organization. Trainees should also become familiar with different communication media (e-mail, memo, face-to-face communication, etc.) and their potential benefits and pitfalls as tools for feedback seeking. These efforts should be especially increased during the socialization period when seeking information represents a crucial activity. OD consultants are also very important clients, not only in terms of enhancement of their professional knowledge, but also in terms of their skills in accurate interpretation of the environment in which they work. Finally, trainers should be alert to the current developments in the research community. FSB is the area that holds much promise, and has generated much interest as researchers are trying to paint a more complete picture of this construct.

Second, the use of process versus outcome, as well as prospective rather than retrospective feedback should be encouraged and emulated in the training setting. This would alert good performers to a false sense of security, especially if they need to change their task tactics later (Fedor et al., 1992), and would encourage poor performers to seek more feedback, as future oriented and seemingly less strictly evaluative feedback will appear less threatening.

The next recommendation is related to individual goal orientation. With the assumption that learning oriented individuals will seek more feedback, training programs should put more emphasis on the employee learning orientation in regard to their work. One can also expect that a move away from predominantly performance orientated goals may contribute to a decrease in employee anxiety and rivalry, both of which also have the potential to inhibit feedback seeking. Finally, impression management should be less relevant in such learning-oriented environments.

Management training Management training programs should address the imperative that managers become more self-conscious about their own actions and the cues they give since most of these are interpreted as feedback by their employees. They need to learn to convey the feedback picture that is consistent with their otherwise conveyed appraisals. (Ashford & Cummings, 1985).

Managers themselves may be trained to assume a norm-setting role in which they will be active feedback seekers, thus performing the behavior which will then be emulated by others (Ashford & Tsui, 1991). At the same time, they need to be trained to resist the yes-men situations by changing feedback sources and by paying more attention to cues other than verbal.

An important tool in managers' hands would be a set of measures of different aspects of performance so that they might provide both positive and negative feedback to the same individuals at the same time (Robinson & Weldon, 1993). This would decrease poor performers' reluctance to seek feedback.

Finally, leadership seminars should also address the FSB concerns. Some leadership styles do not lend themselves to feedback seeking, while others encourage it. Recent theoretical comparisons have favored transformational over transactional leadership style in this context (Madzar, 1994), but no empirical research has yet been conducted to support this proposal. Suggestions have also been made that managers be counseled or trained to hide their bad moods to the extent that these represent an obstacle for feedback seeking (Ang et al., 1993).

Enhancing Feedback Seeking via Organization Development In designing a proper

feedback system, organization development efforts should be focused on systematic investigation of what information and feedback individuals really need, what strategies they have used to get them in the past and what has gone wrong within that process (Ashford, 1986). Minimizing the time and effort required to obtain feedback, should decrease the cost of its acquisition and increase its frequency (Ashford, 1986; Robinson & Weldon, 1992)

An inhibiting effect of an evaluative audience should also be of concern to an OD practitioner. The Ashford and Northcraft (1992) findings should be kept in mind particularly in those organizations that have applied practices such as 360-degree feedback where a multiparty evaluation comprises the core of performance appraisal (Hazucha, Gentile & Schneider, 1993). Suggestions have revolved around reducing the apparent evaluativeness of the work environment to the smallest possible degree. Ashford and Northcraft recommended institutionalizing opportunities for less public feedback exchanges, which should lead to enhanced FSB.

Communication norms should also be the target of change in the attempts to promote feedback seeking. Norms should include acceptance of nontraditional interactions (Ashford, 1986; Mullen, 1994), and should encourage feedback seeking in both directions - from and toward a manager or an employee.

An OD practitioner should have in mind the newcomers' needs for a variety of information, and particularly the fact that they often use monitoring strategies to obtain it. The information environment should be designed in the way that promotes what might be called cue availability. Special attention should be paid to the attempt that these cues (both social and non-social) are truly representative of a particular organizational setting.

In encouraging feedback seeking in groups, an OD practitioner should ensure availability of group level data to all group members, as well as availability of feedback from both human and non-human resources (Robinson and Weldon, 1992). Private channels for feedback seeking should be emphasized in groups where exaggerated group cohesiveness results in pressure to conform (Janis, 1972; Robinson & Weldon, 1992).

A comprehensive organizational change should also involve a careful consideration of information technology that may be used for feedback seeking purposes. The more variety employees have in their choice of the feedback seeking medium, the better are the chances that they will seek feedback.

Finally, here are some ideas that Ashford and Northcraft (1992) provided for feedback system designers. They painted a picture of a more experienced user of the feedback environment as follows: (1) attends to and uses cues from sources with legitimate power rather than from those without it; (2) looks for things that those in power do, over things they might say; (3) emphasizes negative over positive feedback from powerful others; and (4) distrusts positive feedback from coworkers, but finds indirect negative feedback from co-workers to be important (p. 215).

Conclusion

Research in the area of FSB has created new avenues for HRD practitioners in their continuous quest for the ideal organization. We are now closer to understanding the complex phenomenon of a larger feedback context than we were a decade ago, but there are still many mysteries to be unveiled. However, all current and future efforts should account for the fundamental fact that "feedback is valuable only to the extent that its nature and content fit the task at hand" (Ang et al., 1993, p. 20).

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The Role of Managers as Trainers in the Learning Organization: Implications for HRD

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The changing global environment for which knowledge is a strategic competitive advantage requires new training approaches to facilitate continuous learning at the individual, team and organizational level. At a conceptual level, this paper suggests that the manager as trainer approach holds promise in this endeavor, and that new roles for human resource developers will complement this approach. Empirical research is needed to support this proposition.

The manager as trainer approach is not a new phenomenon in the field of human resource development. From an historical perspective, training can be traced back to 1800 B.C. when the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi identified rules governing the transfer of skills from one generation to another (Carnevale, 1990). More formalized training can trace its early roots to the apprenticeships, in which novice craftspersons studied under experts who shared years of knowledge and experience in their craft (Nadler, 1989, Carnevale, 1990). Informal, on-the-job training, also referred to as "sitting with Nelly" (Analoui, 1993) has also been a time-honored training approach in which peers, supervisors and managers provide training.

In today's global economy, organizations are becoming reliant upon knowledge creation and dissemination for sustained competitiveness. Nonaka (1991) contends that:

> in an economy where the only certainty is uncertainty, the one sure source of lasting competitive advantage is knowledge. When markets shift, technologies proliferate, competitors multiply, and products become obsolete almost overnight, successful companies are those that consistently create new knowledge, disseminate it widely throughout the organization, and quickly embody it in new technologies and products (p. 6).

Further, he suggests that the knowledge creating companies' business is continuous innovation. Both Nonaka (1991) and Webber (1993) contend that, concurrent with this notion of continuous innovation, is the imperative to develop the organization's capacity for sustained organization-wide learning. The manager's role with respect to knowledge creating companies is changing drastically. To obtain knowledge workers, "managers, therefore have to attract and motivate the best people; reward, recognize, and retain them; train, educate, and improve them - and, in the most remarkable reversal of all, serve and satisfy them" (Webber, 1993, 27). Therefore, ensuring transfer of training and knowledge become critical activities of the manager.

Today, it is estimated that employers invest $210 billion in workplace training (Carnevale, 1990). Based upon a survey of corporate-training practices of U.S. organizations, Froiland (1993) estimates that more than 47 million people received some type of formal training from their employers in 1993. Despite the investments in training, "not more than 10% of these expenditures actually result in transfer to the job" (Georgenson, 1982, Baldwin and Ford, 1988). However, according to Rover's corporate learning process model (in Marquardt, 1994), all learning should contribute to the organization's bottom line performance. With regard to the learning environment, this model also emphasizes that learning should be as close to the workplace as possible. In other words, the learning should be embedded in the work. This rationale supports the notion that the manager as trainer approach is a promising training intervention to increase transfer of training activities within organizations.

Unfortunately, while the notion of managers as trainers may be widespread in business and industry, little, if any empirical research has been documented on this subject in the training literature. Although there is some literature in sales and technical training which supports this notion of managers as trainers, much of this literature is anecdotal in nature.

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Dimensions of Managerial Roles

Kanungo and Misra (1992) acknowledge that the nature of managerial jobs and skills has been explored with three different research strategies. One method of investigation has emphasized the approach of the classical management theorists, like Fayol and Urwick, who contend that management functions require technical, problem solving, decision making and interpersonal skills. Another method of research has focused on the role of intelligence and intelligent functioning in managerial jobs. The third method of research involves observing what managers actually do. Using this method, Mintzberg (1990) offers a "more supportable and useful description of managerial work" (p. 164). This description is derived from his review and synthesis of research on how various managers have spent their time. Mintzberg (1990) acknowledges that the four words that have dominated management vocabulary since they were first introduced by Henry Fayol in 1916 are *plan, organize, coordinate* and *control*. However, he suggests that these words only indicate some vague objectives that managers have when they work.

Mintzberg (1990) describes the manager's job in terms of ten "roles," or "organized sets of behaviors identified with a position" (p. 168). He contends that formal authority and status give rise to three interpersonal roles (figurehead, leader, liaison), which give rise to three informational roles (monitor, disseminator, spokesperson). These two sets of roles enable the manager to play four decisional roles (entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, negotiator). The leader role is largely reflective of the responsibility that managers have for the work of the people in their unit. He contends that the manager's actions in this regard constitute this role. Further, Mintzberg asserts that "some of these actions involve leadership directly - for example, in most organizations the managers are normally responsible for hiring and training their own staff" (p. 168). In a more recent article, Mintzberg (1994) attempts to integrate

> what we already know managers do around a framework of concentric circles. At the core are the person in the job, the frame of the job, and its agenda. These are surrounded by roles managers perform at three levels: managing by information, managing through people, and managing action, each carried out inside and outside the unit (p. 11).

Managing through people, Mintzberg contends is a multi-level process. Managers lead on the individual level, "one-on-one." Managers "encourage and drive the people of their units -- motivate them, inspire them, coach them, nurture them, push them, mentor them, and so on" (p. 19). Managers lead on the group level by building and managing teams, and ultimately they lead on the unit level, especially with regard to the creation and maintenance of culture. Managers as leaders often adopt some of the roles of trainer, mentor, and coach. These roles are expanded in the context of the learning organization.

The Role of Managers in the Learning Organization

The learning organization has been defined in several ways by Senge, Beck, Melander, Morris, Schwandt, and Watkins and Marsick. However, Senge (1990, 1994), emphasizes the role of managers and leaders in creating learning organizations. He defines learning organizations as "organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (p. 3).

Senge's (1990) conception of the learning organization is one in which the leader assumes new roles and responsibilities. Senge characterizes the leader's new work as being a designer, teacher and steward. Senge suggests that leader as teacher "does *not* mean leader as authoritarian expert whose job it is to teach people the 'correct' view of reality" (p. 11). The leader as teacher is about helping everyone in the organization, including the leader, to gain more insightful views of current reality. This, Senge, says "is in line with a popular emerging view of leaders as coaches, guides, or facilitators" (p. 11). In short, Senge suggests that leaders in learning organizations are responsible for "*building organizations* where people are continually expanding their capabilities to shape their future -- that is leaders are responsible for learning" (p. 9).

Senge further asserts that the future of successful organizations will be directly related to their capacity for sustained organization-wide learning. This view parallels Nonaka's (1991) conception of knowledge-creating companies. According to Nonaka, inventing new knowledge is not solely the work of the R & D department, marketing or strategic planning, it is rather, a way of behaving, a way of being, in which everyone is a knowledge-worker or entrepreneur. Given the magnitude of changes required to develop and promote organization-wide learning capabilities and continuous innovation, Senge (1994) questions why it would be assumed that training and development professionals would be solely charged with making organizational learning happen.

According to Senge, (1990) the learning capabilities that matter are inseparable from the work that people do. Managers are typically more knowledgeable about organizational matters than trainers, so consequently, trainers often lack the credibility to assist in addressing complex issues that require substantive knowledge. Trainers typically do not have accountability for managing such processes so they normally lack the capability to help employees make needed changes. For these reasons, "managers," Senge asserts, "are the only people who can be truly effective in making learning happen" (p. S46). Senge (1994) does not imply that the role of trainers and development personnel is eliminated in the learning organization. He suggests that trainers and developers have two important roles. The first involves helping managers to design learning processes because of their expertise in design and facilitation, and the second involves guiding the diffusion of new learnings. In the context of the learning organization, managers as trainers appear to be critical to achieving sustained organization-wide learning.

Several cases of exemplary global learning organizations which support Senge's contentions about managers roles in the learning organization are provided by Marquardt (1994). At Motorola, for example, executives act as instructors. Motorola's COO, William Weisz contends that managers must be visibly involved, as participants or instructors, because their involvement reflects what is truly perceived to be important by employees. At PPG, not only trainers, but also managers are responsible for learning and also do the training delivery. At Xerox, training in problem solving and quality improvement is delivered in "family groups" which consist of a manager and his/her subordinates. The manager is assisted by a professional trainer in the design and delivery of the training. During the training process, the group selects a project for the application of the quality process and tools. Following training, the manager guides the family group in the use of the quality process. The members of the family group, subsequently work with a professional trainer to provide training to their own subordinates. This method of training is referred to a training cascade.

Stata (1989) acknowledges that the best way his organization, Analog Devices, has found to introduce knowledge and modify behavior is by working with small teams that have the power and resources to enact change. The example he presents is quality improvement, which starts with the divisional manager and his or her direct reports. This approach, enables new knowledge to be transformed into action as an integral part of training. He contends that "this approach, in contrast with sending people individually to centralized training programs, highlights the distinction between individual and organizational learning" (p. 70).

The notion that training and education are "powerful tools for transferring knowledge" (p. 88) is also supported by Garvin (1993). But, he states that they must be linked to implementation. Often, he states, trainers assume that trainees will readily apply new knowledge without taking appropriate steps to ensure that the trainees follow through.

In conclusion, it is evident that the notion of managers as trainers may hold promise, particularly as organizations embrace the concept of continuous learning. The cases and examples that have been provided illustrate that, in the rapidly changing global environment where organization-wide learning is an imperative, both managers and trainers have an important role in facilitating continuous learning and its use within the organization.

Implications for Human Resource Development

Watkins (1989) has defined human resource development as "the field of study and practice responsible for the fostering of a long term, work-related learning capacity at the individual, group and organizational levels. As such, it includes, but is not limited to training, career development, and organizational development" (p. 427). This definition, which reflects the vision of the learning organization, seeks to open the traditional paradigm of practice of the field of HRD, beyond the traditional behavioristic view of practice and its reductionist bias.

Watkins and Marsick (1992) (and Marsick and Watkins 1994) assert that their vision of the field is more of a vision than practice because they recognize that HRD is seldom strategically positioned to influence the organization as a whole. However, it is the broader conceptualization of this field as stated in their definition which will enable human resource developers to create this strategic alignment which will expand HRD's role from changing the threshold of skills in the organization to becoming a partners in the transformation of the organization. Having this mindset, they envision that human resource developers will be called upon to function at a more strategic and conceptual level by focusing on embedding continuous learning strategies within the organization and teaching people how to learn from their own experiences. Human resource developers will not entirely abandon their roles as trainers in ensuring that the workforce has the requisite work skills, they will however, "extend their impact in almost exponential fashion by working with all employees to make self-managed learning more effective and by creating ways for people to share what they can learn" (Watkins and Marsick, 1993, p. 21). Additionally, they can also work closely with managers to build a culture which supports learning within the organization. In turn, managers will be challenged to assume new roles such as trainers, coaches and mentors. According to Kanter (1994), "a great way to develop future leaders is to rotate them through training roles and keep them active in teaching others, even while they pursue their other business responsibilities" (p. S42).

The roles of human resource developers and managers in building the learning organization are at a conceptual level. The lack of empirical research supporting these concepts beyond the base of practitioner literature must be addressed through future research efforts. Currently, an empirical research project is being conducted by a research team, which includes the authors, to evaluate the manager as trainer approach within a Fortune 10 company. The purpose of this research is to provide insight into the effectiveness and limitations of this training method. Future research initiatives are needed to provide insight in the following areas: the roles of human resource developers in supporting and complementing the manager as trainer approach, and the use of this training approach in the new global environment.

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